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THE RELATION OF ETHICS TO SOCIAL SCIENCE.

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ETHICISTS may not consider the relation between their subject and the social sciences an important problem, and certainly it is not a new one; but of recent years interest in it has again been revived to a quite marked degree. It is not difficult to see that the war, for one thing, has awakened in many people a keen desire to know exactly what is most worth while and how it may be attained. The political disaster that has befallen some nations, and the social upheaval accompanying it, has robbed large classes of men of their faith in certain norms and institutions. A crisis nearly always stimulates doubt and inquiry which lead to a revaluation of old values. Hence the Great War has probably something to do with current hopes for a scientific system of ethics.

Apart from it, however, there are still other reasons why a definite solution of the familiar problem would be welcome to many. For in the first place it bears directly upon our modern ideals of democracy and universal enlightenment, it being absolutely essential that the average individual know what is right and wrong, and possess the requisite powers of self-direction. In the second place we live in an age which is rapidly turning its back on religious dogmatism of any persuasion, so that the stress on ethical norms grows as the erstwhile adherence to a formal creed disappears. The more powerful the priesthood, the more widespread a faith in theological concepts, and the less vital a concern for purely worldly affairs. Each factor influences and reinforces the other, if no obstacles intervene. But if life here on earth gains in significance, either because theism and a belief in an immortal soul are waning, or because religion is dedicated especially to the highest possible development of personality and prosperity, then the search for ways and means will gradually be reflected in ethics. The desire

for a scientific basis of conduct will be strengthened. Transcendentalism at least in this one field will give way to empiricism, and thus prepare men for a socialization of norms.

But in the third place there is no doubt that social scientists themselves have been eager to connect their labors closely with the moral issues of the day. It has been felt increasingly that morality is of primary import, and that sociology or economics leave much to be desired if they can furnish no hints as to the best way of harmonizing the divergent interests of individuals. The complexity of relations has become so great, and the need of a moral code for their regulation has grown so rapidly, that scholars feel obliged to substantiate their ethical theories by a reference to palpable facts. There is a noticeable tendency to-day toward a popular treatment of moral problems, toward one which shall rid us of absolutes and prove the relativity of all truths. Ethics as a discipline is becoming steadily less formal, and more factual.

This circumstance indeed is the chief reason why in the eyes of the present writer the relation of ethics to social science deserves careful consideration. As long as people seek transcendent truths, or sources of knowledge, of good and evil, that are not empirically verifiable, so long science can have no place in ethics. If we reduce all moral precepts to a categorical imperative such as Kant made famous, it cannot be difficult to separate science rigidly from a study of morality. The two then will be worlds apart, and the question of a relation be disposed of forever. If a sense of duty, or virtue for its own sake, or purity of motive constitute the whole of ethics, scientific approaches will be unnecessary. We shall postulate a voice of God, or an inborn conscience, or some such occult power, and forthwith leave men to their designs. Those who err will be punished by their own better knowledge, if not otherwise, and the virtuous will thrive on a sweet peace of mind. Social scientists will be automatically debarred from a discussion of ethics. They cannot then trace its roots, nor resolve it into

principles. Nor will they have anything to say about the supposed or real morality of an applied social science.

But it is exactly because many of us realize the pre-eminence of a content in ethics that the relation between it and social inquiries becomes a matter for speculation. If an absolute good does not exist, or at least does not spring entirely from an innate Ought, then questions of a what and whence become logical. In proportion to our espousing the cause of a content-ethics we are likely to hold that scientists have counsel to give to ethicists, or not. The degree of authority of each over the other, their points of contact and of difference, the possibility of reconciling description with prescription, or of proving the moral nature of applied social sciences—all these topics gain in interest once we devote ourselves to a strictly empirical and factual ethics.

For the purposes of this paper it is of course indifferent whether the utilitarian view of good and bad is the correct one, or not. Reasons will presently be submitted why it does seem to many thinkers the only adequate one. But that is a detail rather than a major point. What matters chiefly is our appreciation of the need of a statement on the relation of ethics to social science, if the factual basis of ethics is granted. *If* results mainly count, if the prevailing systems of eudæmonism or utilitarianism are well grounded, or in so far as we preach them, science and ethics cannot be sundered entirely. A differentiation between the two must then follow lines other than those laid down by the a priori ethicists and philosophers. We should then be willing to consider the possibility of reducing our Ought to an Is, until evidence had abundantly proven it impracticable. This is what we owe to social scientists, and what common sense suggests.

The factual or content view of ethics seems the only admissible one to most students for several reasons. Attempts, for instance, at an exclusively formal treatment of the subject have rarely succeeded, because sooner or later results were invoked for a definition of the Supreme Good. And this amounts certainly to a recantation. As thorough

a thinker as Kant could not make his discourse on ethics altogether self-consistent. As has been shown a number of times, he blundered into a petitio principii in proclaiming his cardinal rule for conduct. Moreover, as might just as well have been pointed out, Kant's later and fuller exposition does not quite agree with his earlier and briefer one. It is symptomatic probably that the most formal ethics in philosophical literature is also one of the most fragmentary, while complete treatises from other hands have almost without exception dwelled on circumstances and consequences.

But however this may be, the importance of a content for the Ought is admitted by the great majority of people. Not only are relativity and utility central concepts, but in addition our norms must refer back to objective tests. The old-time subjective virtues have ceased to command respect because they can neither be measured, nor even be verified. To say that faith is the highest good, or that wisdom, or justice, or mercy are supreme virtues, is effectually to prevent a testing of virtue. For there is no way of proving a man evil by these definitions. We cannot get at states of mind or feeling. By subjective norms we must exculpate a man even though we are convinced of his guilt.

But, of course, most of us do not find moral perfection in such bare assurances of goodness. We are no longer given over to a cult which lets creed take the place of conduct or conditions. On the contrary, we are learning to think less of creeds, and more of conduct. We associate the good in everyday life with behavior in concrete situations, with the facts and interrelations constituting our physical and socio-economic environment. In other words, our moral norms have not only been given a content; they have also been linked with measurable tests. To know whether morality obtains, or whether men are saints or sinners, we consult results, not mere protestations of belief and motive. Results in the long run count most. Though the spirit is still a real factor, though under special circumstances a motive may outweigh consequences, and the wrongdoer be forgiven

accordingly; the average of results is nevertheless decisive. Deeds are judged more or less independently of intentions; while the tangible conditions surrounding us have become an index of the general prevalence of a moral spirit.

Human nature is so constituted that a disregard of objective facts in moral appraisals can hardly be tolerated. Men have needs that must be catered to. The laws of chemistry, biology and psychology impose upon us certain duties such as the creation of goods and services and the maintenance of amicable relations, without which society could not flourish. So much is indisputable. Whether we should aim at the continuation of life in any style, or whether such a goal may rightly be considered an Ultimate Good, is a question of no moment here. We know only that as a matter of record ethical systems always *have* sought to preserve existing lives, or else permitted the destruction of some of them solely because other lives amidst conditions esteemed more highly were held to be jeopardized. A war thus is fought (so far as the ethical argument enters into it at all), because the enemy's conduct is adjudged morally reprehensible. Again, individuals in time of peace court death voluntarily so other lives may be saved. Barring religious fanatics, however, men always have framed ethical codes with a view to safeguarding the largest possible number of people, it being apparently understood that in the overwhelming majority of cases life is morally desirable. No large group has seriously proposed the destruction of life as a deliverance from evil. Mankind has regularly believed in the goodness of human nature, and more especially in its powers for good under suitable conditions. Even Christianity preached salvation through the sacrifice of One, on the basis of potentialities inherent in men by the grace of God.

Thus the ultimate mission of ethics has inevitably been the development of sound traits, habits, achievements, and objective surroundings. Results are decisive. Knowledge is virtue only if personality is enhanced by it, or when it acts as a leverage for bettering our fellow men. To be true to one's self may seem fine. Poets have appealed to us

in that tenor. But actually, what makes loyalty to self laudable is its consequence for others. If nothing else, a war should convince us of this fact. And so with all moral norms. They get their rating in conduct and conditions. They aim at the continuation of social life. Self-defence has always been justified morally for this reason. As long as the individual is no menace to others, his life is recognized to be a supreme good.

Since, then, products weigh more than noble intentions or efforts, it follows naturally that moral norms are relative, not absolute. If a Supreme Good exists, it can only be something better than all other good things, but all of them must connect with specific situations and interests. To be sure, the good need not be a pleasure or self-realization in any shape. It need not pander to animalistic instincts or to our anti-social proclivities. Certainly not. An acceptance of a content-ethics does not involve a subscription to hedonism or to any other one system of morality. It merely compels us to become empirical, to acknowledge the possibility (offhand) of a definite relation between social science and ethics. More cannot be claimed. We do well, however, to speak of the Good before defining the Good Man. First *what* is good, then *who* is good; this should be our order. The former represents the type of things or traits or deeds held moral or immoral; the latter is the instance judged by that type. Class and individual are thus co-ordinated. Each contributes something toward the understanding of the other.

What does the individual contribute toward the formulation of a moral code, of the good in various degrees? That indeed is a question we must now consider as of primary significance. The problem before us, be it remembered, is the relation of ethics to social science. We are asking: Can social science prescribe morals because it may uncover the roots of existing morals? May it help to promote moral advancement because it deals partly with the same facts that concern the ethicist? Can an Ought be derived from an Is? How must we explain the standardization of moral

concepts, and what means toward their general observance may social science devise?

Such questions are not easily answered, chiefly because of the many-sidedness of all valuations. Students of psychology and epistemology are familiar with the axiological literature of the last forty years, and are here reminded of the great diversity of opinions on this topic. Values have been treated in many different ways, and proven less easy to analyze than was at first expected. Some have emphasized the feeling, others the cognitive, and still others the volitional, elements involved. The difference between economic and ethical, or between scientific and either moral or esthetic values has also received attention, while from a different standpoint sociologists have examined the nature of valuation. In short, what seemed to be a narrow and well-defined field of investigation turned out to be a very extensive one, and one whose bounds could not be marked by a single stroke.

Now, since a statement of the relation of ethics to social science must be preceded by a proper regard for the sources of moral norms, it behooves us first of all to note the dual nature of all values, viz., their basis in both judgments and conative attitudes. Nearly every Ought, whether self-imposed or due to outside pressure, is a union of these two states of consciousness. There is usually an envisaging of facts as well as a will or desire. The cognitive basis is the more common and obvious; but the volitional must not, therefore, be underrated.

One side of ethical norms brings us face to face with a process of judgment which is as matter-of-fact as that of either science or philosophy. This should be mentioned at the outset, since one may easily overlook it. If for instance I pronounce a war to be an evil, and education a boon, or wisdom a praiseworthy trait and envy a bad one, I am judging data in two different ways. I am interrelating facts *as such*, and I am also interpreting them relative to my own personal interests or to those of other people. The first kind of judgment is purely factual; the second constitutes a

valuation which in its very nature is ethical and goes back to a will, latent or straining for expression.

The first, furthermore, concerns not simply an individual fact, but a group of them; and this likewise merits our attention. The mere mentioning of a war, *e.g.*, involves a large number of events correlated somehow in my mind. I do not hear the speech-sound only. I do not picture war as a single thing or attribute. Every cognitive act of that sort means a coupling of many data, a correlation and valuation in such a manner that their causal nature is felt. As sequences and co-existences they are reviewed or directly experienced. We may even think of them as types of recurrences, that is as natural or social laws. That is quite possible, and logically reconcilable with their being used for moral ratings. But let us bear in mind just now merely the necessity of *facts* for such judgments. Let us detach the top-layer of ethical valuation from the substratum of sheer intellectual apprehension. Barring a formal Kantian ethics, contents must figure in our criteria and in our analysis of them. Because objective tests and measurable results are admittedly an integral part of ethical preachments, therefore the cognitive aspects call for prior consideration. We repeat: If I call wisdom a virtue, I must refer to definite facts. Let us forget for the moment that a moral value is attached to them. Let us keep our eye only on the data that are before us or rehearsed by way of remembrance. These data represent interdependent parts and functions. They make up a complex whose members are variously sensed and imaged by different people. To speak, for example, of a cultured gentleman, or of a deed of mercy, or of a good habit means necessarily to establish a functional relation among the several factors involved. The data of science and ethics are so far identical. Both work with experiential matter. Both see things or events as bundles of relations, not as entities isolated in time and space. Both must treat them as systems, though science alone need care about recurrences and subsumption.

Apart from this last mentioned difference, however, moral

cognition no less than its underlying will-element has an individualistic character that is most important. Complete agreement even on the bare facts is seldom possible, and that mainly because of the nature of the materials under review. In natural science these data are few in number or in kind. They may readily be classified and compared. Instruments for observation and measurement have been highly perfected and are constantly used. Even when passing from physics to biology or geology we still have relatively definite units to deal with. As we pass over, however, to the raw materials of morals, differences of opinion loom up strikingly. They must arise, because ethics treats of inter-human relations or of relations between humans and other sentient beings, all of which are enormously complex.

To be sure, a standardization of judgments takes place to some extent. It is true that the whole learning process is a dialectic of give and take, and that most of us learn by imitation, by absorption and repetition. Thus a great many people will see the very same facts (*as facts*) when speaking of the evils of a war. In goodly measure all of us agree on what war comprises, on its typical happenings and their relative significance. Men have in the course of millions of years developed like organs of sensation and perception, and these provide the first ground for common concepts and associations. In the second place our experiences are largely the same, even as to external features. And in the third place social control tends strongly in the direction of uniformity. This is so because men differ in natural endowments and tastes, in temperament and physical constitution. There are the weak and the strong in a hundred different respects. Personal differentials thus are the first foundation of the control of the many by the few; but eventually, as we reach the civilization of historical times, impersonal factors prove equally important. Economic status, government and its laws, traditions fostered in symbols and professions—these create broad levels of thinking and behavior. Thus, strange as it must seem, differentials give rise to uniformities; the inferior being passes on to others

what he has received from the superior. Our ways of looking at facts and correlating them are to a large extent standardized. Millions of people will analyze a factual complex in pretty much the same manner. So much we must grant.

Yet this similarity in seeing and recognizing social facts does not approach that regarding events of a purely physical make-up. The complexity of relations is so great, their number so vast, their nature so unstable, that some differences of analysis after all remain, especially when the data for judgment are not directly presented to the senses. The congenital and acquired inequalities among men will prevent whole-hearted agreement. Not all people are exposed to the same stimuli, whether physical or psychical; nor do they select them on like principles or work with like memory-associations. Instead, their responses and neural equipments will differ, and correspondingly they will be possessed of different percepts and ideas, imputing different meanings to the same set of circumstances. Hence there is room for dissension among all classes of men. Hence also it is virtually impossible to obtain a consensus of opinion from social scientists. Controversy forms notoriously an appreciable part of their writings. Moot points are almost as common as accepted doctrines. Many theorems can be proven only by unverifiable premises, while in other cases proof consists of references to authority taken on faith.

By the same token, then, the factual analysis of the moralist will also remain in part an individual construct. There are limits beyond which the principles of socialization and control cannot standardize views. But, of course, moral norms are further individualized by the volitional basis which supplements the cognitive, and gives them their peculiar quality. Or to state this thought more concisely: Though in one aspect a moral judgment involves mere facts, it does not really become *moral* until the facts have also been colored by the interests of a willing being, of an organism fighting for life. This second basis of moral valuations is usually the decisive one for the regulation of social affairs,

and accentuates their highly individual character. Ethical rules refer to will and needs, as well as to reason and cognitive processes.

What will means to the psychologist, whether it is something distinct from either cognition or affection, or a compound of feeling and judgment viewed from a particular standpoint—these are questions that may and have been answered variously. We may here waive them. There is widespread agreement, however, on one item, viz., on the existence of two kinds of willing, one being purely conative, and the other overlaid with ideas and images. The more primitive form of willing is regularly expressed in our instincts. Here the laws of growth and of evolution have provided organs and functions that engender definite modes of striving. The basic condition of life is metabolism, that is a series of chemical changes which alternate in a building up and tearing down of tissue and energy. Replacement, growth and decay are continually going on. Without food and shelter life is impossible. The scarcity of sustenance and the surplus of seed have ever demanded a struggle for existence, but even without scarcity the diversification of species would entail a mutual interdependence whose net result must be conflict and decimation. Thus the maintenance of an individual life involves more or less clearly perceived interests, *i.e.*, needs and cravings, fears and hopes, preferences and prejudices.

Our wants have by degrees multiplied so as to be largely remote from the scale of living found among aborigines. The changes form a chapter in the book of human development that does not concern directly our theme. What we need to bear in mind rather is the intimate relation between a civilized man's ideas and his desires or will-for-action. Undoubtedly, though not all actions rest on images centrally aroused, though impulses seek an outlet without the aid of reasoning, yet ethical norms would be meaningless among creatures not gifted somewhat like *homo sapiens*. If moral precepts are focused upon human relations, the explanation is on the one hand the volitional root of the Ought,

and on the other hand the presupposition of a rational being. Creatures are held morally responsible in the degree that they are capable of judgment. Inert things or plants are out of the reckoning altogether. The higher species of beasts are often treated as if morally keyed, but we cannot be sure of it. Savages display a real sense of obligation, but have not reached the plane of evaluation discernible in civilized people. Thus the more evident our mental powers, and the more educated or socially disciplined we are, the more severely do we judge ourselves and others by a moral standard. The principles of learning and of achievement leave us no choice in the matter. Ideas usually give direction to an impetus or to a will slowly maturing.

It deserves repeating, however, that will does not necessarily spring from consciously analyzed wants, and that will-elements differ qualitatively from purely cognitive states. When we will something we refer either to wants in the absence of the gratifying object, or to wants meeting with obstacles, or to emotions coupled with a need, or to projects rehearsed in imagination before being put into execution. All Oughts, we might argue, rest on desires, although not all desires are accompanied by a moral judgment. To say that I do not wish the Good to be realized is not far from contradicting myself, for every Good holds a prospect. Or in other words, though the Ought may represent simply a judgment regarding rules in effect, yet when these rules are violated or not already given recognition, this circumstance must arouse our will for action, for averting further violation and forcing recognition by others. In this sense most moral norms relate at least to a potential will. Ethicists indeed start out with a concept of sovereignty. They speak of men as captains of their fate. They treat of propositions that cannot be proven wrong; but may only be granted or resisted. They broach a problem of values which cannot be demonstrated scientifically. In a moral sense everything or nothing may have value. It depends upon what we want, upon the source of authorization, and upon our definition of means and ends.

Will, therefore, has also been viewed as a power of choice or variation. For psychologists it signifies a degree and form of variation inherent in organisms and especially in man. The range of fluctuations is so wide, the network of interactions so intricate, that the course of specific events cannot be foretold. Philosophers have even distinguished between the causality of physics and the non-causality of psychics. Mind to them seems defiant of the laws of quantity and causation. Freedom of the will is contrasted with mechanism in nature, and correspondingly a line drawn between natural and social sciences. Now, whether this is the best way of describing the volitional aspect or not, it is certainly useful to think of it as a high degree of plasticity and variability based on material facts. Physiologists have their own reasons for favoring this construction, and in a study of the relation between ethics and social science it is likewise convenient. For in this variability we find the key to the immense diversity of human wants and endeavors. It helps us to understand the lack of harmony among men, the continual ebb and flow of the battle for supremacy, the individualistic drift of all moral norms regardless of restraint and standardization through the process of sociation.

The social aspects of will, in any case, should not be rated lightly. We must admit a partial socialization of interests and desires for the same reason that we give prior consideration to the cognitive basis of moral judgments. In historic times the individual has never been wholly independent. He has always bowed to others, or compromised so as to forfeit part of his coveted rights. Precisely because of this fact a reduction of moral norms to will need not mean the teaching of one particular system of ethics. Hedonism is not a necessary sequel to the fusion of cognition and volition in our standards. We may desire pain, poverty and persecution as well as pleasure of the sense or self-aggrandizement. That has long ago been shown, and is quite compatible with the points here brought out. But the development of social levels of abstract thinking also suggests why instinctive leanings have been largely supplanted by deliberate policies,

and how individual will becomes, in many instances, part of a larger will embodied in social groups.

The group may be a numerical majority or a minority. It may be one nation lording it over another, or a league of nations laying down laws for its members, if not for outsiders. The absolute or even the relative size of the will-unit, that is of the dominant body of people, varies with time, place, and circumstance. But in every case the individual is for certain purposes subject to a greater self, to an invisible tribunal which bids him obey even though he may remonstrate secretly. Sociologists are acquainted with the principles of social control, with the radiating centers of prestige, and with the mechanism by which a standardization of many norms is effected. The modus operandi of this influence is not here a question. We must grant merely the existence of a will outranking that of any one person. We must stress the need of reserve forces in an emergency. We must look for assent or abject submission or habitual imitation, if we wish to comprehend the ease with which ethical precepts are transformed into mores and unwritten laws. As individuals we help to create norms, but we also conform to others submitted by leaders in various fields of endeavor. If important precepts are ignored, amendments are in order. If imperative, coercion is resorted to. Agencies are devised for the protection of ethical standards, and thus again the will-element manifests itself.

What is willed to be good, that is necessarily good, provided our will is taken collectively. If all people, for instance, approved of theft, it would become a moral act. If wealth were desired by everybody (or by a ruling class) in preference to all other things, it would thereby rank as the highest good. To-day it might appear as if all of us longed for wealth chiefly; but it is not really so. Other norms are actually esteemed more highly. The supreme good, as the masses see it, is not affluence or fame or power of office. But whatever trait or act is properly endorsed as a virtue, that we must accept as such or face opposition. As remarked before, a will cannot be refuted logically. It can

only be resisted and conquered. If sovereignty is gone, norms are also at an end. That is a daily experience which will repeat itself, the mockery of formalists notwithstanding.

True, however, that among modern nations some rights are accorded even to the vanquished, and that moral judgments are usually passed relative to norms already prevalent and conceded to be valid. Hence wars do not lead to the extermination of the foe, nor does a court of justice settle a suit by applying ethics in the abstract. Existing ideals of government, religion, and levels of living form a sort of constant, as viewed by any one generation. They are assumed to be good and lend the character of justice to decisions that would otherwise perhaps puzzle us. Thus homicide becomes in a civil war a deed of valor, of virtue. Hence norms vary with place and time. Hence conditions do affect creed, even though history must be treated as an emanation of human will, and not as an adaptation chiefly of beliefs to physical facts, or say to an economic environment. In fine, since ethics has a content, the *direction* of will changes. Different objects are aimed at in different periods. People may disagree on what is good and evil. They will come to an agreement only by modifying their demands, by sacrificing interests, or by changing their views on the facts themselves. Or perhaps a struggle ensues, after which the victor may be able to impose some of his standards on the defeated. All this is amply illustrated in the annals of every nation, from earliest times on.

But what becomes of the relation between ethics and science, if it is so? What can the social scientist do to guide people morally, if judgments of good or bad hark back to conative dispositions, if they depend for their execution upon a sovereign will which asserts itself on provocation? What follows if all norms are relative, and creeds and conditions change forever?

A striking way, and a familiar one too, of showing the difference between science and ethics is to contrast mechanism with vitalism, or causation with choice, or nomothetic inquiries with the ideographic. It has often been said that ethics turns on questions of purpose, and science on those

of necessary connections. The one *describes*, the other *prescribes*. The first treats events as happening subject to a Uniformity of Nature, or to a law of quantitative equivalents. The second knows no such uniformities, and asks about the whither of a free will which apparently has no affinity with physical causes. On the one hand we have a study of types, that is of regularities of recurrence of events grouped together more or less definitely. On the other hand we find the individual all-important, and an exact repetition of a situation well nigh incredible. The personal equation gets a new value. Thus everything is objective to the scientist, while our moral notions are plainly anchored in feelings and longings. The tests of a moral good, to be sure, may be objective, but the norm itself must be personal. Unquestionably it is of human origin, and focused upon inter-individual relations. In science the chief task is the discovery of laws or probabilities. Predictions are based on a necessary interdependence of events. For the moral being, however, prediction must remain a personal hope or design, an index of plans and efforts that cannot be predicated of others. Science values universals; ethics the individual will. Surely, the difference of viewpoint in the two fields of labor is patent enough.

So we may agree. It *is* real, provided only we qualify the traditional comparison as follows, namely: We should say, not that ethics and science as professional studies differ in the manner described, but that the enunciator of moral rules on the one side, and a scientist on the other side, differ as stated. For clearly the ethicist as such is a scientist exactly like the astronomer or chemist. Or, if we do not care to call him a scientist, at any rate he is a student of facts like the chemist or astronomer. Our whole treatment of the relation between ethics and social science up to this point has been carried out (let us hope) in the spirit of an investigator of facts. The entire literature on ethics, most certainly, represents an exposition of opinions, things, and relations handled as facts. Historical surveys and the analysis of norms are customarily combined, but always the treatment is descriptive, not admonitory. *The ethicist as*

such does not lay down rules. That is not his function, however strange it may seem. What he does is to show how morals have arisen, what determines the drift of norms, what is their rôle in private and public life, and to what extent similarities obtain for different nations and ages. Yes, these are his topics. But if we wish to make a contrast as outlined above, we must apply it to a reformer or preacher here, and to ethicists or scientists there. The student of ethics does not prescribe remedies for evils. He merely discloses the true nature of moral norms by treating them as facts, as facts with a dual meaning, viz., with a cognitive and a volitional aspect.

Is this, then, the whole connection between ethics and social science? Or should we still derive the contents of our standards from scientific data? And once more, is an application of science necessarily moral?

Part of the answer to these questions was forecast in our discussion of the cognitive element in moral values. No doubt, we can learn from science how ethics arises, and what it leads to. We may furthermore use our knowledge of socio-economic or of bio-psychological processes for the fostering of ends *recognized* as meritorious. How can we deny that an insight into such relations and principles will prove advantageous, after a particular goal has been determined upon ethically? As far as science sheds light on any situation, it may also illumine the path of the would-be reformer. If the Ultimate Good, if any virtue, is defined for us somehow, then we may ask for the surest and most expeditious manner of building it into conduct, and then scientists may possibly help out. Thus it is not inconceivable that the increase of wealth or its equal distribution be proclaimed a cardinal good. Such a moral ideal can be imagined. Well then, this being our norm; economics should have worthwhile advice to offer. It will act as an auxiliary to moralists because it studies the principles governing the production, exchange, and control of goods and services.

But again let us keep in mind the limitations. For in the first place science can never *control* manifestations of the

will. The two are mutually exclusive. Science does not guide the will; it explains it. Moral judgments may be analyzed, but interests and endeavors are not altered thereby. Indirectly, perhaps, in the sense that all knowledge may react upon conduct in some way; but not directly. Needs and hopes and desires and differentials of personality, control and technical means for the realization of moral progress—all these are so mutable, so utterly beyond the ken of scientific abstraction, that they cannot be connected quantitatively. Our understanding of one moral code and its underlying socio-economic motives or conditions will never ensure us a mastery over future ones. If deduction and statistical inference in social science is attended with some risk, then generalizations as to morals will also be inappropriate. If any guidance is at all demanded, the moralist may offer it more logically than the economist or sociologist. For as a scientist I acknowledge myself to be an object for study; as preacher I declare man to be the creator of all truths and values, with the possible implication that scientific assertions are anyhow only the products of a synthetic mind.

In the second place, we must reckon with the difficulty of making sure of the most economical road to our chosen destination. As scientists know, causal relations in socio-economic fields are hard to trace. Plurality of causes and effects plays havoc with our calculations and inductions. We shall rarely be certain of having discovered the real means essential to (that is, constituting the cause of) a consequent which we call the moral good. Hence social science will not after all render moralists as much assistance as might have been hoped on first thought. Even when the norm is decided upon, the analysis and utilization of ways and means may prove futile. No definite quantitative ratios of facts to moral values can exist, for that matter. We must not put the two on one plane, as if they were strictly comparable. That would be a mistake. The wisdom of scientists is always a doubtful asset in the eyes of the moralist. The professional student of ethics will be glad of

such information, but the dictator and champion of rules of conduct may flaunt the counsel of all erudites. What has virtue to do with knowledge? Ah, here we return to the heart of our problem!

To conclude, then, what an examination of the facts leads us to believe is something like this: First, the question of the relation between ethics and social science has meaning only if we assume a contents-ethics, that is an ethics which turns on results as well as motives. Second, there is good reason for rejecting all absolute norms, *a priori* categories, and all purely formal treatments of moral problems. Norms must inevitably be connected with conduct and conditions, so that objective tests may assist us in passing moral judgments. Third, for *social* scientists causality and purpose are merely two different ways of sensing or valuating identical data. Fourth, the ethicist must differentiate between the cognitive, factual elements in a moral judgment, and the volitional aspects which give to these elements their moral or immoral quality. Fifth, ethics as such is a description of facts, but the moralist in another capacity may declare his purposes and rules to be moral in one degree or another. Sixth, the ultimate source of ethical norms is a personal interest or a striving for satisfaction of wants. Want and will in this sense, however, are not individual but social, and hence standardized in an appreciable measure. Seventh, though ethics turns on wants and satisfactions, these need not be hedonistic; nor will they always reconcile personal and social interests. Eighth, the contents of the good changes with time and place, with conditions and creeds mutually interacting. Ninth, social science may help us to realize moral norms *as submitted*, but owing to causal problems such attempts can scarcely ever be completely successful. Tenth, and finally, scientists or statesmen, in applying the conclusions of social science, are probably actuated by moral ideals. But this does not prove their ends, their standards, to be moral. These latter cannot be established by science.

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